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ABSTRACT

In order to strengthen cooperation among institutions of higher education and businesses with global connections in Silicon Valley, a project was undertaken by San Jose City College to compile a list of the internationally oriented business-related courses available at local institutions and identify existing gaps in the curricula. Information gathered from all institutions of higher education in the Silicon Valley was printed in an International Education Directory, developed specifically for businesses. The directory was sent to approximately 1,100 Silicon Valley businesses, along with a questionnaire designed to gather information about international business education and training needs. Forty-one businesses responded to the questionnaire, and the project lacked the resources to conduct a telephone follow-up to increase the response rate. Most of the respondents represented small, manufacturing-type businesses, with annual sales of less than \$25,000, employing 25 or fewer workers. All respondents were interested in learning more about international business practices, and the majority anticipated opening international offices within 3 to 5 years. Many sought foreign language courses focusing on business conversation, a majority preferred a one- or two-day seminar or workshop format, and more than half expressed interest in participating on a business advisory committee for an educational institution. Although survey findings were not statistically significant, the project as a whole provided unique opportunities for interinstitutional and college-business dialogue and cooperation. (JSP)

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A Model for Cooperation

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**INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION/INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS:
A MODEL FOR COOPERATION**

BACKGROUND

In an increasingly global society and economy, the cooperation of education and business is essential for our society to remain both current and competitive. This view is substantiated by the Higher Education Committee of the California State Legislature in their review of the Master Plan for Higher Education. Committee Chairperson John Vasconcellos (1989) described the goals of California public higher education, saying that:

...we recognize that California's economy and society are truly global, linked in myriad ways to the Pacific Rim, Latin America, and well beyond. New industrial organizations and new technologies rapidly redefine jobs and entire economic sectors. So in economic, scientific and social matters, we seek ways for universities and colleges to respond rapidly to a changing environment of enormous complexity. The new economic and social order makes our need for innovation more than just a nicety; it is essential to our state's future.

Consistent with the Master Plan, the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges emphasizes the importance of connecting community colleges and business. During a keynote address at a conference of Community Colleges for International Development, Chancellor Mertes (1990) said:

Along with institutional support (for international education) there needs to be the establishment of linkages with those outside the community colleges -- linkages with business, with industry, and with any number of community agencies that are involved with increasing international understanding. ...The corporate interests of our state, of the nation, have as much in common in this arena as we do, and it is time to forge true partnerships with the private sector.

Toward this end, the California Community Colleges sponsor a collaborative project, Economic Development Network (ED>NET), which provides both encouragement and technical assistance to California's 107 community colleges to increase and improve their international business education curricula.

Community colleges in all areas of the country are carving out their role in international business education and economic development. Chairperson of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), David Ponitz (1989) says, "Economic forces ... suggest international education is not only an exciting opportunity, but an economic necessity to help our communities stay competitive."

There is a growing realization within the national educational community that education and business can work together effectively to promote economic development. For National University Continuing Education Association, Schuch (1989) writes:

We must become increasingly knowledgeable about the world in which we live, including other countries' cultures, religions, and political systems. We will need to better understand the new economic forces that have been unleashed in the world... in order to better understand our competitive advantage.

Examples abound of community colleges in partnership with their community to promote economic development. Kingry and Cole (1985) describe a partnership role of the Oregon community colleges in the development of business. North Carolina's role in cooperating with the community college system is summarized by Scott (1987). Dale Parnell (1987) interviews Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton and Westark Community College President Joel Stubblefield to explore the connection between higher education in Arkansas and local economic development. David R. Pierce (1988) interviews Illinois Governor James Thompson who calls on the state's community colleges to "lead the state into a new era of productivity, competitiveness, and prosperity as a key partner with business, labor and the state's economic development agency."

Florida's successful efforts to forge public-private-business-education partnerships is spotlighted in a report by the National Governor's Association (1989).

Partnership between education and business does not occur without mutual trust (between two entities which have not been traditional allies) and mutual benefit. Educational institutions must recognize their crucial role in educating the workforce of the future to acquire the knowledge, orientation, and skills, to become effective in a global economy. Business must recognize that community colleges are those best equipped to educate their employees to enter the arenas of economic development and global competitiveness.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

San Jose City College is a member of a consortium which has come together to build a global outlook. The Consortium for the Globalization of Silicon Valley is the result of a combined effort of the Center for International Trade and Development (City of San Jose, Economic Development Division), local institutions of higher education, Silicon Valley businesses engaged in international trade, and public agencies concerned with developing international connections. Within the consortium, the Education Committee, made up of representatives from all segments of higher education in Silicon Valley, was organized to acquaint businesses with the myriad ways in which education can assist them to educate and train a workforce increasingly concerned with global issues.

To strengthen cooperation among institutions of higher education and businesses with global connections in Silicon Valley, a project was undertaken to compile the internationally-oriented business-related course work available in local colleges and universities and to identify the gaps which may exist in the curricula from the point of view of the businesses which participated in the project.

Members of the Education Committee, identified their first priority: to develop and strengthen connections between internationally-oriented businesses and the local educational institutions. To achieve this priority, a survey of the post-secondary educational institutions in Bay Area was conducted to identify existing internationally-oriented educational programs useful for training in

regional businesses. The Education Committee reviewed prior surveys of international education and developed a survey appropriate to the region; all institutions of higher education in Silicon Valley were contacted, mailed the survey, and re-contacted by telephone to assure speedy return of the information.

The resulting survey data was compiled *for business* as a user's directory of institutions which provide education and training for employees who desire a global orientation, those who may be sent abroad, and those who wish to improve their ability to work in international environments by learning language, culture and customs. The International Education Directory was mailed to approximately 1100 Silicon Valley businesses with international ties from a mailing list obtained from the World Forum of Silicon Valley. All mailing costs were underwritten by AT&T Language Line Services.

The International Education Directory was accompanied by a second survey questionnaire, also developed by the Consortium's Education Committee. This questionnaire was sent to Silicon Valley businesses to gather information about international business education and training needs and to identify what gaps may exist in the international education curricula of surrounding colleges and universities, from the point of view of business.

The information resulting from this questionnaire was in turn compiled and presented to educational institutions in the project to help them to improve their service to business and to enhance the manner in which higher education can serve as a vital means of globalizing the approach and orientation of businesses in this region.

International Business Education Survey

The international business survey questionnaire, mailed with the International Education Directory contained seventeen questions in both multiple choice and open-ended response formats. The questionnaire itself contained questions compiled and revised from a variety of sources, as well as questions written by the Committee. This exploratory questionnaire was a stimulus to interaction between internationally-oriented businesses and local educational

institutions in order to strengthen communication between and among interested participants.

While there was recognition among Committee members that telephone follow-up would have increased the number of responses, and the accuracy of the survey, staff resources were not available for this purpose. Further, because this was a project without a budget, there were financial and logistical problems with printing and mailing. This resulted in a short return time for the surveys and the compiled results reaching educational institutions after the end of the regular school year.

Results

The survey response was slightly over 3%, with 41 businesses responding. The project succeeded in:

bringing together institutions of higher education in the Silicon Valley,

opening the dialog between the education and business communities,

providing businesses with an International Education Directory, and

suggesting needed curricula to local colleges and universities.

A considerable benefit was in the encouragement of all participants to focus on the importance of global orientation.

Respondents

Of those responding to the questionnaire, most tended to be small, manufacturing-type businesses of twenty-five or fewer with annual sales less than twenty five thousand dollars. Most conduct trade with the Western Europe, Asian countries and with Canada.

All respondents expressed an interest in learning more about international business practices and the majority anticipated opening offices in a variety of global locations within three to five years. Many sought courses for learning business conversation in a foreign language and listed thirteen different languages of choice.

Nearly half of the respondents suggested topics for seminars, courses or workshops, including: Orientation to foreign culture and commercial traditions, Business-oriented language, Avoiding international business blunders, Financial aspects of international business, International law, and International personnel practices.

Slightly over 75% of those responding preferred a one or two day seminar or workshop format. Many selected evening and week-end courses. Only one respondent desired a sixteen-week semester course, a format traditional to institutions of higher learning. More than half expressed interest in participating on a business advisory committee for an educational institution.

CONCLUSION

Many business representatives expressed gratitude upon receiving the International Education Directory. (Following an article about the project in the San Jose Chamber of Commerce Newsletter, many businesses not included in the project have requested copies of the Directory.)

It is clear that many local companies are interested in international business practices, especially orientation to foreign culture, business-oriented language, trade regulations, and international finance, legal and personnel practices. The respondents prefer short-term workshops over traditional length offerings of colleges and many are interested in serving in an advisory capacity for their local institutions of higher education.

While no statistical significance can be attributed to the survey data, this effort resulted in educational significance. The project provided a unique forum for representatives from community colleges, private and public colleges and universities in Silicon Valley to discuss international business education. Also valuable was the dialogue between institutions of higher education and Silicon Valley businesses which focused upon the importance of education and training within the context of a global orientation.

Global interaction, both in the arena of communication and in practical business associations, clearly demands active participation on the part of educators. Particularly in the western coastal area of the U. S., the Pacific Rim is becoming part of economic and geopolitical traditions and at the same time holds the possibility for furthering an understanding of various cultures. This multifaceted global interaction has as its very base the necessity for comprehending what is different--in our languages in our businesses, in our peoples, and in our cultures -- and the demand for new understanding among constituents.

This project, the emergence of an International Education Directory and the opportunity for businesses to articulate their desires for an international education curricula, demonstrates a model for business and education to strengthen their partnership in supporting globalization.

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